



UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire AL4 8AN, UK.

Tel: +44(0)1582 831818 Fax: +44(0)1582 831414

Website: <http://www.ufaw.org.uk>

Email: ufaw@ufaw.org.uk

Media Release

From the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW)

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For Immediate Release:

Promoting Alternatives in Animal Research - Three Rs 50th Anniversary Marked by UFAW

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) has marked the 50th anniversary of the start of the study by UFAW Research Fellow Dr William Russell and his assistant Mr Rex Burch which led to the development of the 'Three Rs' principles (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement), now guiding the use of animals in scientific procedures throughout the world. A special issue of the UFAW scientific journal *Animal Welfare* has been published, including a review by Professor Russell, *The Three Rs: past, present and future*.

The outcome of the UFAW study by Bill Russell and Rex Burch was the concept of the 'Three Rs' as set out in their book, published in 1959, *The Principles of Humane Experimental Technique*. The principles of 'Replacement, Reduction and Refinement' have been adopted throughout the world as the key guiding principles in the humane use of animals in research, and are now incorporated into the legislation and regulations of many countries, including the UK, and the European Union. They have stimulated a great deal of work into finding replacements of the use of live animals with non-animal methods and procedures, into seeking ways of reducing the numbers of animals used and into refining experimental methods, animal housing and care to minimise risks to welfare.

There is a growing number of organisations involved in developing and promoting this work, including the UK's National Centre for the Replacement, Refinement and Reduction of Animals in Research set up by the government in 2004, and the European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM) which, with others inspired by the Three Rs, continues to render obsolete increasing numbers of animal based procedures. The number of animals used in research in the UK is now roughly half what it was 30 years ago.

UFAW continues to promote research and application of the Three Rs as an important part of its work - through its programme of research awards, educational activities, working groups such as those run in collaboration with the British Veterinary Association Animal Welfare Fund (BVA AWF), the Fund for the Replacement of Animals in Medical Experiments (FRAME) and the RSPCA, and through the provision and dissemination of information and advice.

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SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

Chief Executive and Scientific Director: James K Kirkwood BVSc PhD CBiol FIBiol MRCVS

Secretary: Donald C Davidson

Registered Charity No. 207996 (Registered in England) and Company Limited by Guarantee No. 579991



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The charity focuses particular effort in Refinement which, while extremely important for welfare, is often less well-supported than the other Rs. UFAW established the Pharmaceutical Housing and Husbandry Steering Committee (PHHSC), for example, in 1998 – a coalition of industry and welfare organisations which funds research into improving and enriching housing and care for research animals.

“UFAW’s scientific journal *Animal Welfare* has been an important vehicle for promoting work in the Three Rs,” said UFAW Chief Executive and Scientific Director Dr James Kirkwood, “and it is fitting that a special issue should mark their 50th anniversary. Not long after starting the project, Bill Russell gave a presentation at the UFAW AGM in 1955 in which he said of his study ‘I believe it is also one of immense promise for the welfare of large numbers of animals, and I can only hope that its outcome will be as gratifying to look back upon as the other achievements we have heard about tonight’.

“In view of its undoubted profound impact for animal welfare, we hope that Professor Russell does find it duly gratifying to look back upon his project. We are delighted to have published his review of the Three Rs past, present and future as the introductory paper to the special issue of *Animal Welfare*.”

For further information about the special issue, to subscribe to *Animal Welfare*, or for further information about the work of UFAW visit www.ufaw.org.uk, call 01582-831818 or email ufaw@ufaw.org.uk. UFAW is an independent registered charity that relies on donations, subscriptions and legacies to continue its vital scientific and educational work of improving animal welfare. Your support is greatly appreciated.

-ENDS-

Media contacts:

Dr James Kirkwood, Chief Executive and Scientific Director, UFAW. Tel: 01582-831818, email kirkwood@ufaw.org.uk

Dr Robert Hubrecht, Deputy Director, UFAW. Tel: 01582-831818, email hubrecht@ufaw.org.uk

Note to Editors:

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) is an internationally recognised, independent scientific and educational animal welfare charity. It works to improve knowledge and understanding of animals’ needs in order to achieve high standards of welfare for farm, companion, research, captive wild animals and those with which we interact in the wild.

UFAW improves animal welfare worldwide through its programme of awards, grants and scholarships; by educational initiatives, especially at university and college level; by providing information in books, videos, reports and in its scientific journal *Animal Welfare*; by providing expert advice to governments and others, including for legislation and ‘best practice’ guidelines and codes; and by working with animal keepers, scientists, vets, lawyers and all those who care about animals.

This work relies on the support of members, subscribers and donors.

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